

CHAPTER 12

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES



City of Liberty Lake Comprehensive Plan

A. Introduction



This chapter addresses the sometimes difficult issues and processes surrounding the siting of Essential Public Facilities. Although there is some overlap with the issues and processes involved in the siting of “Capital Facilities,” the types of facilities, and the budgetary issues involved, are dissimilar enough to warrant separate chapters in this plan.

In accordance with the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act, and following an extensive policy review process by the Spokane County Steering Committee, the Spokane County Commission has adopted a series of county-wide planning policies to guide the preparation of City and County Comprehensive Plans. Included therein are policies addressing the siting of both “essential public facilities” and “public capital facilities of a countywide or statewide nature,” as specifically required by the GMA. These policies commit the GMA planning jurisdictions of Spokane County to develop a common siting process for these facilities.

As indicated and defined by WAC 365-195-340, essential public facilities can be difficult to site, and their location in a community may be locally unpopular. Local and state governments are charged by GMA with the task of ensuring that such facilities, as needed to support orderly growth and delivery of public services, are sited in a timely and efficient manner.

In 2001 planning staff from all jurisdictions in Spokane County formed a task force to cooperatively develop a regional siting process for all essential public facilities, including Secure Community Transition Facilities (SCTFs). The Essential Public Facilities Task Force, with assistance from the Office of Community Development (OCD), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and technical staff from the jurisdictions developed a regional siting process for essential public facilities titled *Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities*.

Essential Public Facilities Element Vision Statements¹

1. Provide adequate school facilities for grades K-12 within the City that meet existing and future needs
2. Additional elementary school(s)
3. Middle school planned adjacent to present elementary school
4. A high school
5. Satellite college campus

B. History and Background

The Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities is intended to address the siting of essential public facilities not already sited by a local comprehensive plan and for which discretionary land use action is required. This siting process is also intended to meet GMA requirements, as well as the intent of the county-wide planning policies. Another objective is to enhance public participation during the early stages of facility siting, and to reduce the time spent analyzing unacceptable sites thereby producing earlier siting decisions,

¹ Vision Statements were created by the Planning Commission and City Council to reflect citizen comments.

free of political contention that are also consistent with community goals. The regional siting process is based on a coordinated interjurisdictional approach, which in combination with consistent development regulations among the jurisdictions will implement the requirement of equitable distribution of EPF's of a statewide or regional/countywide nature.

Definition of Essential Public Facility

Essential public facilities include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities as defined in RCW 47.06.140, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, and secure community transition facilities as defined in RCW 71.09.020. (RCW 36.70A.200)

Utilities, as defined in the Countywide Planning Policies for Spokane County (CWPPs), are excluded from the EPF regional siting process. In general, a “utility” refers to a system of delivery, as opposed to a facility at which processing and/or treatment occurs. For example, delivery systems such as sewer pipes are utilities, whereas the wastewater treatment plant itself is an EPF.

If the services provided meet an essential public need, the facility may be considered essential, regardless of whether it is publicly or privately owned. An EPF may include a facility providing or housing a needed public service that is:

- provided by or substantially funded by government, or
- provided by a private entity subject to public service obligations, or
- on an officially adopted state, regional, county, or local community EPF list.



Level of Significance

Essential Public Facilities of a State-wide Nature

EPFs having statewide significance are major facilities that provide a needed public service affecting, or potentially affecting, residents and/or property located in two (2) or more Washington State counties and may be included on the Washington State Office of Financial Management list of EPFs. These facilities include, but are not limited to: regional transportation facilities, such as commercial and military airports, freeways, highways and beltways; state correctional facilities; secure community transition facilities; state social services; state parks; and state higher-educational facilities.

Essential Public Facilities of a Regional/County-wide Nature



EPFs having regional/countywide significance are local or interlocal facilities providing a needed public service affecting, or potentially affecting, residents and/or property located in two or more Spokane County jurisdictions. They include, but are not limited to: general aviation airports; county correctional facilities; regional transportation system; public transit maintenance and operational facilities; regional solid waste disposal/recycling/composting/handling facilities; community colleges; regional wastewater treatment facilities; arenas, stadiums and other



entertainment facilities; and regional social and health services such as inpatient hospitals, mental health facilities, substance abuse treatment centers, and group homes (including adult family homes, boarding and retirement homes, and nursing homes). Although group homes are listed as EPFs, siting of housing for children in custody of the state (not including juveniles held in county criminal detention facilities or state juvenile institutions as defined in RCW 13.40.020), or for persons with handicaps as defined under the Federal Fair Housing Act, is exempt from the Regional Siting Process.

Essential Public Facilities of a Local Nature



EPFs having local significance are facilities providing a needed public service affecting or potentially affecting only residents and/or property within the jurisdiction in which they are located. The City of Liberty Lake's comprehensive plan shall provide for additional locally significant public facilities that are also likely to be considered as "essential". For example, the following may fall into such a list: fire stations, police stations, child care facilities, public libraries, community

parks, recreation facilities, community centers, local social services, and elementary, middle and high schools, etc.

When developing locally significant EPFs, the City shall document the reasons for adding a particular type of facility to the local list. There shall be relative consistency of these lists from one jurisdiction to the next, in order to avoid forcing the siting of a particular facility in one jurisdiction or another and to assist in meeting service providers' permitting needs.

Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities

The City of Liberty Lake, an incorporated entity in Spokane County and political subdivision of the State of Washington, in conjunction with the remaining incorporated small towns and cities and with the City of Spokane and Spokane County, have entered into an interlocal agreement to follow the *Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities* when siting facilities of a state-wide or regional/county-wide significance. Unless it is otherwise preempted by state or federal laws, the *Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities* will apply to any and all future efforts to site an essential public facility of statewide or regional/countywide significance within Spokane County.

The entire *Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities*, as well as Attachment A from the interlocal agreement, are contained in Appendix H of this plan.

Amendments

The *Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities* process may be amended, upon recommendation by the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners, through established procedures approved by all incorporated entities of Spokane County.

C. Goals and Policies

Goals

EPF.1a: Facilitate the siting of public and private essential public facilities when the essential public facility is of a state-wide or regional/county-wide nature.



EPF.1b: Facilitate the siting of public and private essential public facilities when the City of Liberty Lake is the appropriate location.

EPF.1c: Ensure essential public facilities will be reviewed in an equitable manner.

EPF.1d: Ensure the City of Liberty Lake's practices in the development of specific measures for meeting goals for the GMA, County-Wide Planning Policies, and development regulations are generally consistent with those of other jurisdictions.

EPF.1e: Enhance public participation during the early stages of facility siting.

Policy

EPF.1.1: Follow the process for siting of essential public facilities as set forth in the *Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities*.